

Historic plans show Sydney' first property boom

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Want to know what your suburb looked like 100 years ago?

The State Library of NSW is making hundreds of historic subdivision plans of Sydney and regional suburbs available online, including plans for Alexandria, Dapto, Elizabeth Farm and Lindfield.

Dating from as early as the 1860s up to the 1930s these plans were designed to advertise the subdivision and sale of land. They provide a glimpse into Sydney's early property booms.

"The story of how the Sydney region developed and changed over time can be found in the State Library's extensive collection of over 40,000 subdivision plans," says Alex Byrne, NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive.

"These visually striking records illustrate how Sydney's fascination with property began very early in this city's history," says Dr Byrne.

Real estate agents and auctioneers would use colourful posters, billboards and pamphlets to advertise their land sales. Many are beautifully drawn and feature local sketches and descriptions of the surrounding area to attract the attention and interest of buyers.

"They range in format from hand-drawn surveyors' plans to decorative colour-lithographed posters, and provide a valuable resource for genealogists, local historians and art lovers alike," says Dr Byrne.

"Some of the plans are annotated with sales figures, and you can where transport routes influenced the popularity of a suburb and how communities grew around local shops, parks and schools."

With support from the NSW Government for its Digital Excellence Program, the State Library is fast-tracking the digitisation of its entire collection of subdivision plans and will be progressively make them available online over the next two years.

The subdivision plans from over 250 NSW suburbs and town are currently being digitised in alphabetical order, however the State Library is giving Sydneysiders the chance to vote to have their suburb moved to the top of the list.

Media Release



The Library is asking for people to Tweet the name of their suburb using #DigitiseMySuburb and tag @StateLibraryNSW. The most Tweeted suburb (between 6 January 2015 –17 February 2015) will be the next in line for digitisation.

The winning suburb will be announced on the State Library's website on 18 February 2015.

More information is available at sl.nsw.gov.au

Media interviews, images and more information, please contact:

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